

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION**

Ameren Transmission Company of Illinois	}	
	}	
Petition for a Certificate of Public Convenience	}	
and Necessity, pursuant to Section 8-406.1 of	}	
the Illinois Public Utilities Act, and an Order	}	
pursuant to Section 8-503 of the Public Utilities	}	Case No.: 12-0598
Act, to Construct, Operate and Maintain a New	}	
High Voltage Electric Service Line and Related	}	
Facilities in the Counties of Adams, Brown, Cass,	}	
Champaign, Christian, Clark, Coles, Edgar,	}	
Fulton, Macon, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie,	}	
Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, and Shelby,	}	
Illinois.	}	

**DIRECT TESTIMONY ON REHEARING
OF
STEVE RHEA**

Intervenor MSSCLPG Exhibit 9.0

DIRECT TESTIMONY ON REHEARING OF STEVE RHEA

Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND CURRENT RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

A. Stephen L. Rhea. 2995 Nortonville Blacktop, Waverly, Illinois 62692.

Q. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE PROCEEDING IN WHICH YOU ARE SUBMITTING THIS TESTIMONY?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. DID YOU PREVIOUSLY TESTIFY IN THIS CASE?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. HAVE YOU REVIEWED THE TESTIMONY THAT YOU PREVIOUSLY GAVE?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. DO YOU WISH TO MAKE ANY CHANGES TO THAT TESTIMONY?

A. No, I believe it is in general correct. I would however like to make some clarifications. On p. 2 of my testimony (Intervenor MSSCLPG Exhibit 2.0), I refer to 18 intervening interests. Since that time, a number of additional parties have joined the MSSCLPG and I am advised that more wish to join our effort. I likewise identified the names and addresses of our members. Naturally, this is expanding. On p. 4, beginning at line 78, I spoke about modern and advanced farming techniques being jeopardized. I failed to mention certain of my background which might be relevant with regard to this statement. Therefore I would like to supplement the testimony that I previously provided. In addition to the background information that I previously furnished, for the last 55 years, I have been involved with and worked in farming. I have either been employed by or consulted with major manufacturers of farm equipment. This would include Case IH, Caterpillar, White Farm Equipment, and

John Deere. The main focus of that employment was advertising and marketing. For the past 32 years, I have either been president or CEO of Rhea & Kaiser Consulting Firm, which has an office address of 400 East Diehl Road, Naperville, Illinois. I am currently Chairman of the Board. Either as an employee or through my employment with Rhea & Kaiser, I have worked with the above mentioned manufacturers of farm equipment. Also in the course of being actively involved in farming, I have kept myself aware of the various advancements in farm equipment as well as the techniques of modern farming.

Q. PLEASE PROVIDE SOME SUMMARY INFORMATION REGARDING THE ADVANCEMENT IN FARM EQUIPMENT THROUGH THE YEARS.

A. Fifteen to twenty years ago, a sixteen row planter was considered state of the art. I regularly now see planters with 24 to 32 row capacities.

Q. IN YOUR OPINION, WILL THE PLACEMENT OF THE 345 kV LINE ALONG THE REBUTTAL RECOMMENDED ROUTE AFFECT MODERN FARMING OPERATIONS?

A. Yes, it will. The most obvious example would be the modern planter that I mentioned above. Although we are now regularly seeing 32 row planters, I reasonably expect in the future there will be planters with even greater capacity and these will have a considerable amount more difficulty attempting to avoid any poles or other obstructions in the field. I would also mention that we are now able to apply fertilizer by variable rate application. We deal with Brandt Consolidated, our fertilizer, seed, and agricultural chemical supplier. Every three years, we sample our fields in 2.5 acre grids and test the soil conditions. Utilizing variable rate technology, Brandt is able to apply fertilizer to our fields, taking into consideration the

2.5 acre grids that we sample. Brandt utilizes GPS technology in the application of the fertilizer. As the applicator goes through the fields, it applies more or less fertilizer utilizing GPS as it proceeds from one grid to another. The intent is to apply such fertilizer as is reasonably necessary through the various portions of my farm, without applying any excess quantities. I have been informed and I believe that the placement of a 345 kV line on or near my farm will disrupt this GPS technology. The application of fertilizer by variable rate technology is important not only to the farmers in question, but to the public in general. As to the farmers, we spend our money efficiently in fertilizing our fields. Equally important is the environmental impact of applying only such fertilizer as is reasonably required for environmental reasons. Overapplication of fertilizer can result in runoff, eventually to the Illinois River, eventually to the Mississippi River, eventually to the Gulf of Mexico. These are consequences we can at least minimize utilizing variable rate technology, which will not be possible if GPS signals are impaired by the proposed 345 kV line. As to the application of other agricultural chemicals, certain of these chemicals are best applied by aerial application. Once again, the placement of a 345 kV line will hinder if not preclude such aerial application. Further, technology is now available for driverless tractors. I recently viewed a Kinze grain cart demonstration on YouTube. Once again, if a 345 kV line is placed such that it interrupts GPS technology, driverless tractors will not be able to be utilized in any affected field.

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

A. Yes. I am aware of the fact that ATXI has presented testimony that they will appropriately compensate the farmers who might be affected by the new 345 kV line. I simply do not

67 believe that this is possible. Today we simply do not have all the knowledge as to the future
68 impact of the placement of a 345 kV line. Without such information, it seems impossible
69 to adequately negotiate any kind of settlement. I can only imagine the negotiations and what
70 occurred with regard to the existing 138 kV corridor. Did the owners of that land have any
71 idea as to the future consequences of the placement of the line in question? Were 32 row
72 planters even envisioned at that time? Was GPS technology utilized in farming at that time?
73 Absolutely not. We can only guess what will be happening to modern farming in the future.
74 Once these poles and lines are installed, they will hinder operations by all future farmers
75 attempting to utilize the land. The Rebuttal Recommended Route will affect farmland that
76 is not currently encumbered by power lines. Utilization of the existing corridor will affect
77 farmland that is already encumbered by the 138 kV line. It seems unreasonable to me to
78 limit production into the future for farmland that is not so affected.

79 **Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?**

80 **A.** Yes, it does.